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The Commonweal

December 28, 1951

DEADLOCK IN MOROCCO

Robert Barrat

Christmas in Positano

Henry Rago

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The Commonweal

WEEK BY WEEK

The Good Tidings

HERE in America Christmas is an event that sweeps everything before it. For a few days it is so important in our lives that our normal strains and anxieties recede deep into the background. For the moment personal problems are forgotten, tensions eased. And we turn from such disturbing spectacles as the recent revelations of corruption in public office, from growing distrust of the party in power in Washington and lack of confidence in its political rivals. We thrust aside the dangers of inflation, the burden of higher living costs and higher taxes and even what satisfaction we have with the nation's increasing capacity for self-defense, the present degree of national economic prosperity and our continuing social progress.

There are broader feelings of vague uneasiness which also temporarily subside. For the time we ignore the unknown plans of the Kremlin, the weaknesses of Europe, the atom bomb, the revolt of the world's colonial peoples and the envy which American living standards have sown in many hearts the world over. We give but passing thoughts to our men in bleak Korea. It is only momentarily, if we think of them at all, that our minds advert to the peoples behind the Iron Curtain who are bravely celebrating Christmas in their hearts—or to such fellow-men as the Chinese Christians whose missionaries are forcibly being taken from them.

We are caught up in an aura of good feeling, in the heart-warming pleasure of exchanging greetings and gifts, in witnessing the joyful play of children. There are the vague symbolism of the candles, the colored lights, the holly, the tinsel and the tree. We have carols sandwiched in with "Rudolph" and a "White Christmas" incessantly coming to us over the air. There are traditional family Christmas dinners and happy visits with relatives and friends. Christmas truly is a time to count one's blessings.

Yet, it would seem that except for brief moments the essential meaning of Christmas eludes us. The source of our great surge of happiness often remains quite hidden. The giving and receiving, the rekindling of affections, the carols, the church bells and the star, all provide some clue. So likewise the fact that for a while we turn away from our normal preoccupations.

For the message of Christmas is essentially simple and clear. God is with the world. He has sent His Divine Son to redeem us all, to unite us to Him. The Babe who once lay in a manger in Bethlehem is He Whose glory filled the heavens. He is come to save us "that we may receive the adoption of sons."

We may have abiding confidence, then, that God has not abandoned the world He made despite man's sinfulness and neglect of his Creator and his fellow-man. His Son is come to rule over us. History unfolds in accordance with the designs of a merciful Providence; it is sustained by the wisdom of the Almighty.

AS WE lift up our hearts in a spirit of filial trust, we perceive that the intimate presence of the Savior among us is the real reason for our joy at Christmas. For in possessing Him we possess all things.

Happily the world has intimations of all this. For a few days the agnostic half believes. Nineteen and a half centuries ago all things were made new by the birth of the Christ Child. Since then this earth has never been the same. It is only at Christmas that our secularized, materialistic and desperate world acknowledges, with varying degrees of conviction, the most stupendous fact in its entire history.

"Operation Manhunt"

NOT the least of President Truman's problems comes under the heading of "Opera-

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tion Manhunt"—his own facetious term for the ever-present and pressing need to put top-drawer men in the top-drawer government jobs. The President is finding it increasingly difficult to lure the experts and seasoned leaders of the nation away from private life into the Washington goldfish bowl. Our political involvements are more widespread and delicate than they have ever been, especially in the field of foreign relations, with a corresponding need for able leadership, but probably never before has it been so hard to enlist leadership or to keep it, once it is gotten.

Criticism has become so bitter and intemperate that many able men, used to the amenities of university life or the give-and-take of business or the law, are extremely hesitant. There is, too, the question of salaries, for many are not anxious to take a big cut, especially since there is no corresponding increase in prestige. In the past foreign-affairs experts often had as alternatives the low-paying university or the equally low-paying government; but recently the private foundations have been making very attractive offers which provide a pecunious third way. James Reston, the distinguished Washington observer, pointed out not long ago that several of the more able and experienced men have taken positions with the foundations and more are planning to.

The new president of the Rockefeller Foundation is the State Department's Dean Rusk. Joseph E. Johnson, a State Department expert on the United Nations, heads the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, while Joseph Pasvolsky, leading world authority on the structure of the UN, is connected with the Brookings Institute.

• NEXT WEEK •

DAVID CORT writes "The Fix," a story about some *fans watching the deciding game of the baseball season through a television-store window.*

"The first three days of October, 1951, brought out the best and the worst in large numbers of the American people. Events, as if written by a master of melodrama, had laid it on the line. Either a man had the fortitude to go on hoping or he hadn't. The bars were filled with people for whom the suspense had been drawn to too fine a point. Not for a long time will the issue again be put quite that sharply."

According to the well-informed Mr. Reston, the Government has just about given up hope of attracting the best men to permanent careers in Government. Mr. Truman seems to be reconciled to taking what he can get when he can get it. The pattern of frequent resignations after short periods of service and sporadic bureau shakeups seems destined to go on and on.

Government service has never been more challenging, significant or fraught with responsibility than today. Why is it that so few are willing to plunge right in? The explanation can hardly rely wholly on its poor monetary returns. Human experience would seem to indicate that when the personal satisfactions are enough, the type of man who is needed and wanted, as a rule, is willing to pass up the big paychecks. The significant thing now is that Washington prestige is at a new low. What should be an honor is often deemed merely a headache.

Mr. Truman himself is not without responsibility for the present climate. Perhaps from a misplaced sense of personal loyalty to friends, his Administration has given house to mediocrity time and again. Politicians have occupied seats clearly meant for statesmen. The intellectual and moral poverty of Mr. Truman's loyal opposition has made its own peculiar contribution. Neither Senator McCarthy nor Senator Taft has added glory or dignity to the concept of government service. And not without its influence here, finally, has been the muddle-headed "liberalism" of the last Younger Generation whose moral bankruptcy was so vividly symbolized in Alger Hiss.

One cause has been linked, almost inevitably, to another. Without the Hisses, there may have been no McCarthy; without the McCarthys, the tone of political debate might have been held high enough to keep responsible men from taking cover from the poison gas of defamation, though their presence was needed in Washington.

That a democracy's foremost citizens are loath to accept political responsibility is a serious matter; in itself it is even more disturbing than the present revelations of graft and corruption, though the two are inevitably connected. The answer is not simple. However pressing the need for reforms, no one-plank program can suddenly right all the wrongs in Washington or change the moral and political climate of the United States. Along with solid efforts to make the structural and personal changes necessary will have to go such a general change of mind and attitude as can only be called spiritual—the

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slow, painful process of education that will produce a citizenry so well grounded in principle and political responsibility that Government and Government service will regain the prestige and honor that has seeped away through the years. That seepage began not in Washington but in every local community where graft and corruption are tolerated as inevitable and reach out to touch even highly respectable citizens. Washington is the terminal point.

The immediate responsibility, of course, lies with the President and his Administration and with all those who have been charged with carrying on the people's affairs. But ultimately it lies with the people themselves. The home, the church, the school, the press, the citizen's groups —here is where the problem will finally be solved if it is solved. As long as our institutions are free, we will get the kind of government we deserve.

Indian Elections

THE campaign is on for the new state of India's first national elections, which take place next month. It will be an experience in political democracy that bears watching; the outcome can have worldwide consequences.

Reports of the early days of the campaign indicate the vast differences there are between an Indian and a United States election. Mr. Nehru is an able politician who is making the most of his extreme personal prestige, but he reacts quite unlike the average Western candidate. He admits certain failings on his own part and that of the India Congress Party; but he tells the electorate that he does not want their votes unless they have faith in him and his party.

When protests over some of the 4,000 candidates are heard, Mr. Nehru admits that certain candidates might be better. But there were so many to name and scarcely more than a month in which to select them. Next time the Congress Party will try to do better. At this distance such frankness sounds engaging—a little of the same ingredient would add a refreshing element to our own political campaigns.

Of course Mr. Nehru addresses the various crowds with a certain confidence. He himself is extremely popular, as is the neutralism of the Congress Party. If its record on continued discrimination against the untouchables leaves much to be desired and the party itself is not too well liked, no single opposing party of sufficient stature looms in the offing to provide a real challenge to the incumbents. By following the course of this election we can obtain much instruction about the Orient.

De-emphasis

IT took the disclosures of "fixes" in big-time basketball to do it, but at last a fairly concerted effort to cut intercollegiate athletic contests down to size seems under way. It will find stubborn going. The vested interests are many. The facilities for big crowds are already built; high-paid coaches wield considerable influence with supporting alumni, who want a winning team; in some instances an elaborate recruiting set-up would have to be dismantled.

A number of prominent college heads now appear to be determined, however, to bring football back into line. They frown on the post-season bowl games that present so lucrative a reward for an all-winning season. They demand that all players should be genuine students who maintain decent grades. They would bar freshmen from the varsity.

One of the biggest evils is recruiting. It involves the try-outs constituted by post-season high school games, lavish, all-expense trips for high school stars to colleges or big games and heavy inducements (indeed competitive bidding) in the form of athletic scholarships. The development of winning teams also means spring practice, the use of offensive and defensive "platoons" and the elevation of bigtime sports to the main reason for an athlete's going to college.

De-emphasis is something like disarmament. It requires a certain degree of mutual trust. It is difficult to go in for it unilaterally. That is why the adoption of adequate restraining rules by various regional conferences would embody a certain promise. If all are on the same footing—and if no one cheats—student supporters of respective teams in a conference will have just as much to cheer about as ever.

There are other heartening signs. Professional teams are playing to smaller audiences. A number of high schools found last season that even night games with musical trimmings do not produce an adequate "gate." In certain areas, at least, sports appear to be declining to their rightful stature. Even the restricting facilities of television are shunting things in this direction. We have far from reached the point where games are contracted primarily for the benefit of the participants (as with an intra-mural sports program) but for the moment the protracted over-

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emphasis of American intercollegiate athletics is happily under heavy fire.

A Vote for Revolution

THE fact that the French Assembly has ratified the Schuman Plan for coordinating the production and distribution of iron and steel in Western Europe is encouraging. It is a step that the United States has urged France and the other Western European states to take because, having a national belief in the efficiency and strength of union, we have held to the belief that the Schuman Plan will provide a firm economic groundwork for the later political and military union of Europe.

Our part in all this has,to a great extent, been that of interested spectators offering encouragement to the Europeans. But some of our traveling Congressmen have gone further than this. They have developed an outspoken case of bitterness at what appears to be the slow rate of progress toward union being made in Europe.

It might be well for us to try to understand the vote of the French Assembly in American terms. It is as though our Congress had voted to tie the steel mills of Pittsburgh and Gary into an agreement affecting production, price and distribution schedules with, say, Canada and Mexico. We would thus be relinquishing part of our full sovereignty over these mills and over our economy. We would be doing this in the interests of raising output, lowering prices, eliminating needless competition and the ruinous scramble for limited resources, all in an effort to establish in the international community an environment favorable to distributive justice and to a life free of war.

To say the least, this would be a revolutionary thing for us to do. Most of us would not vote for it without thinking twice. The French have decided to take the step partly because they feel that they must do it to survive. But whatever their reasons, their vote amounts to a vote of faith in a new idea and in the essential reasonableness of their fellow Europeans.

We Americans may rightly hope that Mr. Churchill can be persuaded to reverse the aloof attitude he has taken toward the various projects for European union since he has assumed office. But we hardly have the right to lecture Mr. Churchill unless we realize that the day is coming when we ourselves, as the wealthiest power in the Atlantic community and with the most at stake, will almost certainly have to be prepared to sacrifice some of our sovereignty in the interests of making that community a stronger and more efficient union of peoples.

Truce

AT one of the truce negotiating sessions in Korea, the Communist negotiators reacted unfavorably to a UN proposal and explained that they were not disposed to come to terms on the particular point under discussion because our negotiators were assuming the attitude of victors toward the vanquished. This is not a remark that is likely to sit well with most Americans, whose instincts in time of war are to demand unconditional surrender. After all, the inclination to demand unconditional surrender is not an altogether unreasonable one when a nation is provoked to war and rightly considers itself to be engaged in defending a cause of justice.

In Korea we might have demanded unconditional surrender but we have not in fact done so because, basically, what we are fighting in Korea is international Communism, a worldwide conspiracy with worldwide battle plans, and it simply does not behoove us to risk an atomic war by diverting our major military power to ground advantageous to the enemy in order to get such a surrender.

As Mr. Dulles said recently in Tokyo, a conditional truce in Korea does not mean that we are giving up the idea of uniting all of Korea. We will simply try to do that by peaceful means. In the past we have suffered the illusion that unconditional surrender almost necessarily leads to a blissful period of peace; we may be getting rid of that illusion now but the job we take up after a truce will nevertheless be long, hard and without very much precedent.

No man can say whether or not we shall be successful without a further recourse to fighting. And in the larger scope of worldwide resistance to Communist pressure, no one can say whether or not we shall be able to defend the rights of man and eventually to liberate the enslaved without becoming involved in a world war. But what has happened in Korea and what is happening now in Europe gives us reason to hope that the tide can be turned without the convulsion we seek to prevent.

If that is actually the case, then it may be that the men who first had the courage to take action in Korea and, later, to keep that action within bounds, will in the end receive the honor they deserve.

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Deadlock in Morocco

Native leaders demand complete independence; the French insist on preparing the people first.

By ROBERT BARRAT

THE protest Egypt recently made against the French administration in Morocco seems laughable to a number of Frenchmen. They feel that Egypt, a feudal country extremely backward economically, is in no position to criticize the French, to whom Morocco owes so much. They cite the Arab proverb about "sweeping the dirt away from one's own door first."

These Frenchmen are perhaps right as far as the internal situation of Egypt goes. They are certainly wrong when they refuse to consider that there is a Moroccan problem—or even a North African problem. Once the actual elements of the problem begin to be known, the question becomes whether there is any chance of finding a solution without the intervention of the highest international authority, even if such intervention would be somewhat humiliating for the prestige of France.

We have reached an impasse. The Sultan of Morocco, taking up quietly but firmly the claims of the Istiglal nationalist party, requests of France that she restore complete independence. France, through her Resident Generals, replies that the protectorate treaty of 1912 is still in force, that she has the obligation of continuing to prepare the Moroccan people for conducting their own affairs. While waiting until they are capable of self-government she offers the Sultan partial and gradual reforms. He rejects these reforms and claims full independence. That is the deadlock.

As a result there is a danger that in the months ahead things will go so badly that Morocco will become a new Indo-China—especially after the recent bloody incidents at Casablanca. For many reasons it would be unfortunate if an Indo-China situation should develop in Morocco, the most obvious of which is that the Atlantic community cannot afford to have a conflagration at the gateway to the Mediterranean.

What seems more serious to me is that the traditional friendship which united our two countries—evidenced by Moroccan loyalty during two wars—is about to give way little by little to a hostile attitude which fills older Moroccans and older Frenchmen with consternation. How have we reached this point?

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THE French have been in Morocco since the beginning of the century. The Moghreb was then a medieval country, prey internally to the worst disorders, ravaged by the quarrels of rival claimants and the savage struggles of the tribes. The Algeciras Act of 1906 recognized this country as a French sphere of influence. By the protectorate Treaty of Fez of 1912, following the Franco-German agreement of the previous November, Sultan Moulay Hafid agreed to an almost complete relinquishing of his sovereignty, in domestic and foreign affairs, to the French.

Morocco did not do badly as a result of this arrangement; quite the contrary. One has only to evoke here the name of that prodigious French leader, Lyautey, who through his political and military efforts succeeded in three years in restoring the authority of the central government of the Sultan—the Maghzen—throughout the entire country. To be sure this authority (except on the religious level) was only nominal; temporal power actually resided in the hands of French administrators and technicians. But Lyautey's ideas, like those of all great colonizers, were clearly progressive.

"Contrary to what has taken place in the rest of North Africa," he rightly noted in 1916, "France found in Morocco an historic and independent empire, extremely jealous of her independence, adamant against any servitude. . . ." And he added in 1926, a little before returning to France as a simple citizen: "It will be necessary to think again of independence for Morocco within the next ten years."

In order to lead this country toward independence Lyautey had followed the only policy then possible in a society of a feudal character: that of building on existing élites, learning their aspirations, enlightening their minds. Hence there were schools for the sons of notables and Moslem "colleges" that he opened throughout the Moghreb. A solid Islamic culture developed to counterbalance the emancipating effects of Western culture.

After Lyautey left there was never a successor of a comparable stature, capable at one and the same time of imposing his authority on the Moroccan people and of leading them gently toward emancipation.

From 1928 on, the date on which the present Sultan, Sidi Mohammed, mounted the throne, a series of crises has unceasingly troubled the protectorate. In 1930 the French administration clumsily sought to place the Berbers under the jurisdiction of the French courts. The newspapers then let it be known that this would be an excellent means of "assimilating the Berbers."

It is worth stating here that the Berbers are North African aborigines; they occupied the Moghreb before the Arab invaders and an unmistakable political rivalry has always existed between the two. But the Moslem religion is an extremely powerful bond of union between

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them and it manifested itself in the unanimous cry that went up against the protectorate, which was accused of attempting to sow division in Islam. I am emphasizing this first crisis because that was when the members of the intelligentsia developed by Lyautey appeared for the first time. They were the ones who were to furnish the leadership in the Istiglal Party and, when confronted by French colonial errors, to link their cause more and more openly with that of the Arab League.

Things might have developed slowly and peacefully. But war came in 1940. In 1942, with the Allied landing, the Moroccans sincerely believed that the power of France overseas had come to an end, that the time was at hand, with the support of American anti-colonialists, officially to claim their independence. France rejected this claim energetically through Gabriel Puaux, who was then the Resident. Things quieted down only to flare up brutally in 1947 through the sensational speech of the Sultan at Tangiers, in which His Majesty declared his complete solidarity with the Arab East—without even mentioning the bonds of friendship uniting his throne to France.

★

THESE various crises did but translate into political terms the aspirations of an important segment of Moroccan opinion, for profound economic and social transformations had contributed to bringing the country out of its medieval state. These transformations were without doubt due to France. But it would be extravagant to say that they were all instituted for the benefit of the Moroccan people themselves and motivated by lofty sentiments of charity and brotherhood.

Of course everyone knows that all colonization, even on the part of great soldiers and excellent administrators, brings in its train ruffians and adventurers if not outright freebooters. And when the French boast of "a railway system over a thousand miles long, trading stations, roads, scientific agriculture, works of art," the Moroccans reply: "You are the ones who have primarily benefited by them. We are still waiting for schools for our children, social security for our workers, housing for our city-dwellers, improvement of the land, which would truly benefit *us*."

It requires courage to recognize that since the departure of Lyautey the authorities have been unable to sustain and keep in motion the progressive program of the protectorate—a program which he had carried out with such success. Whatever is accomplished now appears to be motivated by hidden fears.

When a Resident General, such as M. Erick Labonne, in 1946 proposed courageous reforms to make the administration more efficient, especially in juridical matters, the two leading bodies—the French chambers of agriculture, and of commerce and industry—protested and threatened dire consequences. The Resident General had spoken of a "renovation and considerable expansion of the schools, reform of the judiciary, establishment and appropriate development of the social laws and guarantees of employment, and a series of measures that would have succeeded in opening the doors to values and capacities in every domain. . . ."

How exasperated the Moroccans were by the hostility of the French colonists to even such moderate proposals! To add to this distrust there was, especially during 1945 and 1946, a recognition of certain misdeeds of the liberal capitalist regime which the central administration had been unable to stem. Gateway to the two Americas and Africa, land of refuge for European capital threatened by the high postwar taxes, strategic place for withdrawal in case of a world conflict, Morocco has been taken over for the past five or six years by businessmen who are for the most part quite ignorant of Morocco, her peoples, the aspirations of her élites. Mines, warehouses, ports and communications, electricity, large factories—it is a new country that they are in process of building, but with the unconcern for human and social problems that normally characterizes this type of exploitation.

That explains the appearance on the coast of a new urban proletariat, beset by extremely precarious living conditions, easy prey for the extremist parties. Some quarter of a million to three hundred thousand Moroccan workers live and die in the rows of hovels (ice-cold in winter, broiling hot in summer) that sprawl in wretched fashion around the edges of the large Moroccan cities.

I must add that for several months passions have been aflame and that, foreseeing trouble, the military command and the civil authorities, basing their policy on the martial law which has been in effect since September, 1939, are keeping order by means which are certainly effective but consistently contrary to the Declaration of the Rights of Man: preventive arrests, arbitrary condemnations, rigid censorship of the press, no freedom of assembly, expropriation, ban on trade unions.

They went so far last February, on the basis of the opposition existing between city and countryside, Berbers and Arabs, older and younger generations, as to attempt to incite the chiefs of the Berber tribes, and even those Arabs hostile to the Istiglal Party, against the Sultan, and to brandish before him the threat of deposing him and replacing him with the Glaoui, pasha of Marradech. An official disavowal of the Istiglal Party was forcibly obtained from the Sultan but he soon retracted it in the course of some statements made to Egyptian newsmen.

This is therefore a situation which is constantly flaring up and which cannot be prolonged without danger. I must add that the replacement of General Juin—who had in every way lost ground—by General Guillaume, as Resident General, is not calculated to help matters either. He was formerly a leader of Moroccan sharpshooters and is known as an intrepid soldier and a tough customer. He is used to having men bow low on coming into his presence. The new Residnet seems lacking in the elementary diplomatic sense that the present situation would impose. A Lyautey would be able to sustain the language it was necessary to sustain—at a moment when the French army was the greatest of all armies, when France was still a nation of the first rank. And even then he could bend.

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Today, sustained by the propaganda of the Arab League, a certain good will on the part of the Anglo-Saxon world and the support of the Moroccan intelligentsia, the Sultan has an attitude marked by shrewdness and dignity. "Allah knows who lies," he said, in the presence of the Resident during a reception of the diplomatic corps.

★

DESPITE the mistakes France has committed, it would nevertheless be folly on the part of the leaders of the Istiglal Party to seek in Morocco a repetition of what has transpired in Egypt or Iran.

It is obviously not a question of hundreds of thousands of French colonists, who have cultivated this land and made it what it is, leaving Casa, Fez and the Moroccan countryside as the English left Abadan. But let us make a gratuitous assumption. Let us suppose that one day all Frenchmen withdraw from Morocco. The Moroccans would then discover themselves on the edge of a dangerous precipice: a sovereignty with little prestige, a hierarchy of native command badly dislocated, a multiplicity of obscure forces ready to fight one another. It is the realization of the dangers of such a situation that explains the calm which continues to reign there.

There has never been a question, except for a few fanatics, of the Moroccans' demanding that the French withdraw. What they ask is simply to be left masters of their own political destiny. ("The Moroccan problem cannot be resolved except by the abolition of the protectorate treaty and the constituting of a genuine Moroccan government which would be designated by His Arabian Majesty, in order to conclude a new treaty which on the one hand would guarantee Morocco her rights fully and without reserve, and on the other would assure the French their legitimate interests in conformity with the spirit of the new international agreements.") These words are from the protest of the Istiglal Party to the Sultan, July 24, 1946, and the essence of this protest is still valid.

It is not independence without France that the Moroccans claim, but independence with France. The only reasonable means of putting an end to Moroccan unrest is therefore for France to make a solemn declaration that Morocco rightly is free.

★

IN CONCLUSION may I express a certain anxiety? There are no Frenchmen in Morocco (except for the older ones who are submerged by the waves of new arrivals) who have the mental courage to propose such a solution. In the present personnel of the French Government and in the strangely timid and socially reactionary Chamber that we have, I see few men whose authority would be great enough to put it over.

What then? I wonder if in the end an inquiry on Morocco by the Colonial Commission of the UN and the repercussions it would produce would not provide for France that warning which she needs to take cognizance of the gravity and urgency of the Moroccan problem.

SO THEY TELL ME

The Art of Fiction

WHEN the mind is tired, and into the mind's tiredness there has been gathered an accumulation of unease, it is acquitted of responsibility. There is a lesion of the quality of vitality, so that the mind does perverse things. If it has been used to the discipline of effort, some febrile appeal to effort is still heard from it, but it is in conflict with the desire and need for quiet. We know that we are ill when, as Hazlitt has put it, "we lose the relish of enjoyment."

Illness is the strongest infection of our pride, and its mark is the anguished knowledge that you can no longer do what you wish. You are without power to do at all what, once, you thought you could do well. There is no humiliation greater than the demonstrated knowledge that you are not in command of yourself, that the enemy called disease has surrounded you, has got past your secondary defenses, that you have been made captive.

But it is part of sickness' goodness that you recuperate; that you have ceased to be ill, but are not entirely well. You are absolved from all obligations, all contracts are without force over you. Your vanity accepts the proposition that you are dispensable because your renewed vigor will demonstrate once more that you are not. It is a splendid time if only it does not last too long. Many of the things you have always meant to read you now manage to get through.

★

I had kept myself from participating in the Henry James revival partly through this kind of occupied postponement. I knew very little about the main body of his writing, and the little I knew satisfied me. It left me with an odd content; it aroused no immediate curiosity, it did not press on me the need for quicker and increased acquaintance. Besides, I had been put off by critics' phrases about his "late second manner" and like deprecatory words. That he had concerned himself with tea-parties was a judgment which, whatever its origin and motive, was an appeal to one's sense of virility. I had remembered Somerset Maugham's remark that James engaged himself with subtleties which "seem so remote from life."

All of us, I take it, like to think that we are close to life, near the very center of its heat and sweat. But it is a foolish assertion which maintains that Holmes the soldier was any closer to life than Holmes the jurist. Jane Austen was no less close to the kind of life she has immortally given to us than was Stendhal to his. The physician touched with the bought temptation to destroy life, or to suppress it secretly, is no more ,or less, caught in the web of reality than a general who gave the

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order at Passchendale. In his *Closing the Ring* Winston Churchill says of the people in Jane Austen that they had no worries about wars or revolutions: "Only manners controlling natural passions so far as they could, together with cultured explanations of any mischance." It is well said by a man who can lay claim to what is called a full life, but Jane Austen is no less an artist for all of that. The proletarian novels claimed to be close to life and full of reality, but no one except pathetic men in line of dull duty shall ever read them anymore. Art requires more than force for the simple reason that substance is form because there is no substance without form.

Some measure of the character of this argument is found in Graham Greene's astonishingly effective and profoundly moving and persuasive novel *The End of the Affair*. Mr. Greene allows his narrator to say this: "Henry James once, in a discussion with Walter Besant, said that a young woman with sufficient talent need only to pass the messroom windows of a Guards barracks and look inside in order to write a novel about the Brigade, but I think she would have found it necessary to go to bed with a Guardsman if only to check up on the details."

I do not know whether or not Mr. Greene aligns himself with this argument. But James has already replied to it. In his celebrated essay "The Art of Fiction" he has written: "Greater miracles have been seen than that, imagination assisting, she could speak the truth about some of these gentlemen." In any event what experience of life a man has had is not determining. What is important is what he has done with it. One need only read the notes Joseph Conrad made on a trip to the Congo, and to compare them with *Heart of Darkness* in order to see what the artistic imagination can do to give pulse and color to human activity. The artist is not a scientist, not a recorder; he is a man who, in his own and differing way, "converts the very pulses of the air into revelations."

★

IN MR. GREENE'S new novel his Sarah asks in the harassed privacy of her diary: "What do we do in the desert if we lose each other? How does one go on living after that?" How does one? It is a fair and recurring question for any novelist to answer, and the answers, and the way of writing them, are as various, comforting, and uncomforting as there are novelists to answer it.

It is true, of course, that the look at evil Graham Greene gives us, and the violence of mind and of motive and of conflict Faulkner conveys to us are things Henry James shrank from. From them he drew back even when they occurred to others—as when he rebuked what he regarded as the animalism of Thomas Hardy's *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*. But Faulkner is there when you want him—and I did not want him at the time I am speaking of.

What I read was James' *Portrait of a Lady*. Without any preparation and with no knowledge of it at all, in the presence of its remarkable opening I knew at once that I was in the hands of a supreme and astonishing artist. I knew that I was in the hands of a man who took it for granted that I had a lot of time; and that he took it for granted, too, that he had absolute confidence in his skilled and disciplined power to command all of that time. "A novel," he tells us, "is in its broadest definition a personal, a direct impression of life: that, to begin with, constitutes its value, which is greater or less according to the intensity of the impression." The intensity of the impression which Henry James leaves in this novel is so great as to scorch the skin of your mind; and it is as abiding as is anything which leaves a permanent mark on the life of your spirit.

It is a novel about an American lady in Europe—a fresh, vain, confident, innocent, noble woman who is infinitely generous and whose spirit is injured by evil in the form of the conventional. Before I go any further with it I should like to come back to the things James shrank from. He refused less to observe things, to be aware of them, than to talk of them, to do more than intimate them, hint at them without becoming intimate with their disarray. For instance, of Isobel Archer—after her graceless marriage—he says this: "But there were certain things she could never take in. To begin with, they were hideously unclean. She was not a daughter of the Puritans, but for all that she believed in such a thing as chastity and even as decency. It would appear that Osmond was far from doing anything of the sort; some of his traditions made her push back her skirts."

★

HERE we are brought back to the original argument about life and reality. If I understand the English language, I know here what James is talking about. Faulkner would not have conveyed it in the same way: he would have shown me, as he does, for example, in *Light in August*. I am not shocked by the one nor made prim by the other. I accept the fact that the novelist who is, also, a dramatist, will make his appeal to my eyes, and that James—as in this passage—is depending for my persuasion on my imagination as well as on his own. Were one to tell me that Henry James is not a realist I could only reply that I did not understand what he was talking about—and that I did not think he knew either.

Henry James' Lady, so patiently, so intricately, so exquisitely conveyed to us, is a woman who is afraid of passion. "She spent half her time in thinking of beauty and bravery and magnanimity; she had a fixed determination to regard the world as a place of brightness, of free expansion of irresistible action: she held it to be detestable to be afraid or ashamed. She had an infinite hope that she should never do anything wrong." She is, to put it like that, a victim of romanticism. And about her life, malignantly, the shadows gather one by evil one. Henry James' portrait of her reviewing her life, in the little hours, as "the candles burned down to their sockets," is one of the most convincing, felt, and beautiful chapters, I think, in all of literature.

He writes with a classic severity of language, subject to the same learned restraint by which passion is subdued in man. His prose, like her emotion, is subject to no

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tumult. It is arrested for being in violation of measure, as if by an English policeman who has no need of a gun, but is speaking soft reprimand to a citizen who is naturally obedient to law. It has, in consequence, a certain grace; but it is not that of Nijinsky: it does not leap and remain for startled moments almost out of sight—muscular, vigorous, eager, enjoying flight; at once dazzling and ever laughing at its confounding power, proud, in its own talented exultation.

I cannot here write any more about this novel. You must read it for yourself. "Is it possible," asks Graham Greene's novelist, "to fall in love over a dish of onions?" It is. And in the act, and in its unseen consequences, life is enriched, a new home made for the spirit, or the length of sorrow increased, the journey made desperate and desolate. One artist is distinguished from another not by his choice of subject, but by what he has added to our joy, to the enlargement of our wisdom, by his revelation of the dark, fantastic interiors of the soul where suffering lives or evil—or, as in the case of Conrad, to warn us of the things we cannot do lest we be shadowed, like Lord Jim, or, as in the case of Henry James too, we know the incredible horror which lies at the heart of darkness.

FRANCIS DOWNING.

The Stage

THE GRAND TOUR

ON SEVERAL earlier occasions Elmer Rice has experimented with fragile and fragmentary materials, attempting to make up in detail and warmth what was lacking in dramatic vigor. The process has rarely been successful for him. "Two on an Island" set out to capture the New York mood as it impressed itself on a couple of youngsters, with only moderately interesting results. "Not for Children" monkeyed around with the aura of the theatre, contrasting its conventions and realities in discursive fashion; it was one of Mr. Rice's most dismal failures. "Dream Girl" dealt in episodic snatches of shopgirl fantasy, and here the method paid off; but "Dream Girl" has a sharp focus, a consistently satirical point of view which tied its impressionistic wanderings into a unified bundle. "The Grand Tour," Rice's latest play, is by no means the worst of his gentle excursions into smalltalk, but it isn't an especially felicitous one, either, and is probably not long for this world.

This time the author takes us along as he rambles across Europe. We are in the company of a Connecticut schoolteacher who has never been abroad before, and we are introduced to Chartres, Montreux, and Rome through her eyes. Portions of this travelogue are charming—Beatrice Straight does the American innocent with great sensitivity—and portions of it are merely loquacious. Mr. Rice has a fatuous streak in him, too, as witness the following sample of shipboard dialogue:

"Napoleon was the greatest man who ever lived."

"What about Christ?"

"The man on horseback versus the man on the cross."

"I wonder who'll win?"

This may not be verbatim, since I wasn't able to get it down fast enough, but it is roughly representative of the kind of speculative collegiana which overtakes Mr. Rice when he lets himself go. For the most part, he is brighter than this, but his lapses are disconcerting.

We are also introduced, by way of casual plotting, to a young man whose marriage has hit the skids—for not very clear reasons—and who has embezzled a tidy sum of money. Our schoolteacher falls in love with him, offers him her inheritance as a means of clearing himself, returns him to his wife, and then scampers back to her classroom, presumably the wiser for travel. The author has a point about moral integrity to make here, but it is fuzzily stated and inadequately dramatized. Mostly, the emotional complications are merely puzzling.

The play suffers a great deal, too, from its direction and mounting. Mr. Rice has staged it himself, but you get the impression that he has been content throughout rehearsals to simply sit and enjoy his own lines, so little has he provided in the way of revealing business or theatrical tension. And Howard Bay's sets—huge painted drops—are monstrously out of proportion to the scale of the play. Mr. Rice is capable of engaging humor, but there isn't enough of it here for so extensive a trip. (*Closed at the Martin Beck*)

THE CONSTANT WIFE

SOMERSET MAUGHAM wrote this cynical bit of high comedy—about a woman who matches her husband's infidelity with a calculated escapade of her own—twenty-five years ago. The secure and idle upper-class world which served as its formal background has pretty much vanished from view; and we are not terribly patient now with the special moral struggles of determined sophisticates. But Mr. Maugham was a witty man, and he was able to project his joke about the double standard into the rarefied world of social fantasy—into what we call the 'manners' atmosphere. As a result, "The Constant Wife" survives the loss of its immediate setting in time, and emerges today as a sustained and frequently very funny artifice. Line by line, it is still good; and a sleek acting company is reading it with relish.

Katherine Cornell is usually warm in the wrong things. Given an heroic role, she tends to acquire a dignity which all but freezes the blood. Given this piece of bric-a-brac, which could be very coolly played, she begins to glow. But I can't say I really minded. The play may need a trace of affection to hold it down these days, and the expansive grace of its star is a considerable asset.

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Equally delightful is Grace George, with some of the play's sharpest lines. And Brian Aherne is brilliantly pompous as the husband who finds himself checkmated. (*At the National*)

LO AND BEHOLD

I DON'T know how legitimate it is for a reviewer to go to a play rooting for the author beforehand. It may lead him into seeing more than is really there, or it may cause him to bend over backward—perhaps too far backward—in an effort to be clear-headed. I can only say that John Patrick, author of "The Hasty Heart," "The Curious Savage," and the current "Lo and Behold," strikes me as having a delightful sense of humor, and I keep hoping with each new play that he will hit upon his "Harvey."

"Lo and Behold," I'm afraid, is still short of the mark. It is full of funny lines, as always; it has its share of perceptive character touches; and it is woefully shy on narrative or honest substance. As nearly as I can get hold of Mr. Patrick's problem, it is this: his is an off-center brand of humor, tangential, deadpan, surprising—and, for maximum effect, it needs to bounce off an otherwise plausible, rational, and human springboard. It needs contrast, something ordinary to depart from. But Mr. Patrick has a habit—in his later plays, at least—of making his narratives as fey as his wit, of piling the absurd on top of the absurd, and of letting the two parts of his play cancel each other out. The shock of the unexpected, which is Mr. Patrick's principal stock in trade as a writer of comedy, is impossible on a stage peopled with lunatics ("The Curious Savage") or ghosts ("Lo and Behold"). Because everything is unexpected in such circumstances, there is nothing left to twist, and we are finally worn down by an overabundance of random invention.

For the record, Doro Merande is hilarious as the wraith of an Indian squaw, Lee Grant is appealing as a suddenly wealthy housemaid, Jeffrey Lynn is remarkably straightforward as a conventional leading man, Leo Carroll is as tart as possible in the finally underwritten part of a newly dead misanthrope, and Cloris Leachman, as another of the ghosts, reminds us once more that she is going to be a star any day now. Miss Leachman moves beautifully, speaks beautifully, and is beautiful to look at besides. (*At the Booth*) WALTER KERR.

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The Screen

"IT COMES WITH THE TERRITORY"

TWO extraordinarily good American movies are on our screens now, movies that aren't particularly festive for the holiday season, but which deserve to be seen and listened to for the thoughtful material they provide. So much has been written about Arthur Miller's play *"Death of a Salesman"* that its theme, about the drummer who landed in the ashcan at 63, is already part of American legend although the play is only some two years old. Stanley Roberts wrote a script which is quite faithful to the original (the play was more cinematic than theatrical in the first place) and Stanley Kramer has given it an excellent production. The flashbacks, revealing all the little things in Willy Loman's background of false standards that add up to the desperate present, aren't really flashbacks at all: a voice or sound or event in the present reminds Willy of something that happened years ago—and Willy steps right from the room where he is into the past episode that set the foundation for today's tragedy. Be sure to see this unusual movie from the beginning; all its pieces are necessary and all fit into a whole that made Willy realize why his life added up to a zero.

But even in that Willy was wrong; he *had* accomplished something, and Frederic March's splended performance makes this clear. He may have been stupid and shallow and unscrupulous, but he was a hard worker —misled by his own empty dreams of money and popularity. Under Laslo Benedek's direction, and perhaps because of the use of close-ups, Willy is a much more broken and sick man in the movie than he was on the stage. The pleas of his wife (beautifully played by Mildred Dunnock) to his neglectful sons provide the film's most poignant scenes: "He's not the finest character that ever lived. But he's a human being, and a terrible thing is happening to him. . . . He's not to be allowed to fall into his grave like an old dog. Attention, attention must finally be paid to such a person." The boys don't know what to do—for, after all, they were trained by this father who failed them. The elder (effectively played by Kevin McCarthy) is a confused, jobless wanderer at 34, but shows at the film's end a few signs of being able to find himself. The younger (Cameron Mitchell) is even more confused and will no doubt follow his father's dream to come out as number one man.

Obviously, "Salesman" is pretty grim stuff. Although the film has great understanding of little people and human frailties and the father-son conflict, I wish there were some way its makers could have introduced some softening humor to relieve its lengthy tension. The play at least had an intermission. The film leaves one limp; and its most moving scene, when the elder son after a long quarreling day with his father breaks down in

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his arms, will have even hardened salesmen in tears. The unhappy ending (suicide or accident?) is consistent with Willy's mistaken dreams. Instead of a prayer, Willy's brother-in-law pronounces this requiem: "nobody dast blame this man. A salesman is got to dream. It comes with the territory."

★

ANOTHER brave new film that points a finger at confused Americans today is *"I Want You."* No matter how often critics may complain that Samuel Goldwyn's movies are too pretty and shiny, they must admit that Goldwyn is not afraid to say the things that must be said. "The Best Years of Our Lives" is still held up as the best of the post-war films, and now his new picture looks at this muddy post-post war period and dares to have a hero who doesn't want to be drafted.

Irwin Shaw wrote this unusual screenplay from several short stories by Edward Newhouse, and if it seems long and slow at times, let it be said that this is because of its realistic qualities and Mark Robson's direction, which emphasizes a series of little episodes that happen as they might happen in real life and are not blown up for theatrical effect. The plot is about a family, their friends and associates—a mother and father (excellently played by Robert Keith and Mildred Dunnock) and two sons, one (Dana Andrews) who served well in World War II and now has a wife (Dorothy McGuire) and two kids and a booming construction business; and the other (handsome Farley Granger) who is somewhat of a playboy and wants to marry a pretty girl (Peggy Dow) who also lives in this medium-sized, typical American town in the summer of 1950. The bubble of prosperity and comfort bursts for this family and many other Americans when the President announces that American troops will be used in Korea.

The elder son feels he cannot follow his mother's request that he ask the draft board for a deferment for his brother on the grounds that he is essential to the construction business. Then when the younger son is drafted, he becomes bitter about the whole thing because he is sure he was railroaded into the army by the head of the draft board (Ray Collins) who is Peggy's father. Because these people are portrayed so realistically by this good cast, the things they do and say are very moving. When the younger brother explodes at a dinner party given by his sister-in-law and says he wishes we'd drop an A-bomb on the enemy, even though they may retaliate with a bomb on us, his sister-in-law calls him stupid and selfish and sends him out of her house.

"I Want You" doesn't come up with pat answers to today's national and international problems, but it does say very effectively that the holiday of drifting is over, and if we prefer our kind of country and government, we've got to fight for it on all fronts wherever they are. At times "I Want You" is raw and grim in putting over its points, and at times it approaches the sentimental; but it is never just a recruiting poster for our white bearded Uncle Sam or for Sam Goldwyn's business. It is a well-made human drama to which attention must be paid.

PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

Christmas in Positano

By HENRY RAGO

AT THIS time last year we were living in a small fishing-village on the Bay of Salerno between Sorrento and Amalfi. There was scarcely room for anything—village or beach—between the sheer rise of mountains and the sea below, but somehow Positano, centuries ago, had squeezed in. It managed only a small beach of volcanic sand, some hundred yards long, cradled—if that is the word—between steep masses of rock, which only the young boys of the village could climb. There was only one circuitous way up, a strategy of detours and temporary reverses, and an even more circuitous way down.

I managed one morning to get two-thirds of the way up, not by any determined effort or adventurous resolution but by a series of accidents. I had begun by looking for some small ledge a few feet up where I might sit in the sun with my notebook; then I got interested in another place I saw, perhaps a little off to the side; then in another place, a few feet higher; and gradually I lost the point of the morning's work and became wholly absorbed in the challenge of the rocks. I should have known better, but anyway there I was at last, huddled in some uncharted pocket and unwilling to leave it for anything up or down. Even if I could have found a secure foothold for going higher, I had lost all interest. I had looked down and seen the Mediterranean curling around a heap of rocks, and the sharp edges aiming straight up. All solidity below me had vanished in an unaccountable curve.

Happily I had only about a quarter hour of this. And then one of the Positano striplings, perhaps fourteen years old, happened along that part of the beach and watched me for a minute or so. In some stupid way I felt too proud to ask for help, and with the tact of his ancient civilization he guessed that he shouldn't ask me to commit myself. He simply began climbing, with a swiftness and an ease that made me realize afresh how far out of my depth I had been.

Very soon he was sharing my ledge; and again like the ancient Italian he was, he put off the real business by making himself comfortable, as though for a long stay, and I carried on this ritual of courtesy—whether for my own sake now or for his, I didn't know—by offering him a cigarette. We smoked together. I hoped at first that we might get through the smoking fairly quickly, and I began by drawing hard, but he was taking his time—simply keeping the cigarette in his mouth, as the Europeans do, and looking out to sea.

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All this was over at last, and then he asked whether I was going down. I said I was, and he thought he might be. So he went first, cutting sharp right-angles to unsuspected shelves, going now a little way up and now a light and easy jump down to a small platform, looking back for me at each step but not too obviously, and giving me a hand once across one uninviting stretch that required a sort of swimming position. And we got down. Once we were on the sand I allowed all my thoughts to rush into my brain full force, and I felt a little too nervous now even for a cigarette, ritualistic or not.

Well, the beach, and the steep rock on each side. And only about twenty yards in from the water, the village begins. Gradually with a few tiny fishing-boats newly hauled in, and the great shimmering nets hanging between them to dry; then the long even lineup of the village fleet, equally tiny boats, good only for a dart into the Mediterranean and a quick withdrawal; and right behind them the houses and immediately with the houses, the mountains.

Only the line of houses on the very edge of the beach are on one level. After that a house takes what hold it can, and the streets are not streets at all but stairways. You go nowhere in Positano except by climbing up or down these winding stairways, and every journey is the long way round. Having a drink with someone or simply going to your own house usually means climbing a hundred, two hundred, even three hundred steps. Everybody knows how many steps it takes to go anywhere in Positano. The count is slow and worked over many times and the figures are exact. If you want to do something relaxing after or instead of climbing steps, you can take a walk along Positano's share of the Amalfi Drive, and the steep grade and the laborious twists seem as nothing at all.

So the village is piled, almost impossibly, against the mountains. A brief slope—that is to say, something less than perpendicular—permits it; and here and there grants a small ledge for an orange grove or a natural balcony for hibiscus and bougainvillea. Then the mountains take over—vertical, hard, gothic.

From the beach you see roofs, not houses. Or you remember only roofs, all of them strangely flattened domes with more than a suggestion of the East. What you see of the houses, between roofs, is at first only the faded and shabby greyness of old plaster. You are disturbed by the presence of color beneath that greyness or perhaps in some kind of aura above it or around it. You must live in Positano for several months before you understand its colors—the subtlest pinks, blues, yellows, with nothing in them that tries to be ingratiating.

★

OUR house was in the upper part of the village. It had a small orange grove below it and a lemon grove to its side. It could not be seen from the road. There was a path which led off the road, along the side of a great wall of rock, across a small foot bridge, and by a slow curve through the orange trees, and finally, in the midst of the oranges, but thirty stone-steps above them, there was the house. All this, as I told everybody many times and as I kept telling myself, was our property, including the orange trees and the foot bridge. We had never owned an orange grove before, and so this was a delight, but it seemed even more incredible that we should own a foot bridge. I do not know whether we shall ever own a foot bridge again.

The house was built on a high platform of solid rock, its back against a vertical thrust of mountain. There were two flights of steps over and across that base, the turn was a sharp ninety degrees. And after all this the house was not really a house, but a long balcony for which a house was improvised. The rooms were strung out one after another, from one long hall, so that each room, including the kitchen, opened out upon the terrazza to the sun and the sea. All the floors were tile, in each room a different color. The walls were stark white, as most interiors were in Positano. All day, everything in the house shimmered with the presence of the Mediterranean.

It was on the terrazza that we placed our Christmas table. Some of the more determined internationals had climbed high enough into the mountains to find Christmas trees, but the effort did not attract us. So we got a large piece of cardboard and painted a tree, and this we placed on a small table with some Christmas pastry which one of the women in the village had baked for us, some cheese, some wine, and a bottle of Strega.

We had waited until Christmas Eve to do this much, but for days and days before, the village had been echoing with "Auguri." Such precipitousness was not explained. People simply told us that it was the custom to greet others in anticipation of the feast, even if you saw those others every day and gave them the same "Auguri" every day. But we noticed too that even after Christmas, the villagers stretched the holidays interminably with a new reason each time for saying "Buona festa" and of course the shops were closed and everything else waited. The cobbler and the old woman who was knitting a sweater for me kept putting me off with "Dopo la festa," but I wasn't clear which feast was meant, especially after I had made allowance for Christmas itself, the Circumcision, and the Epiphany. The plain truth, quite apart from the liturgy of the matter, was that the village loved its holidays and had no pressing reason not to, and we were quite sure of this when, after there wasn't even a good Positanese reason for any more feasts, we heard a merry old woman, in the middle of the Mass, say to another, "Buona *fatta* festa." A greeting for the Morning After, so insatiable was their love for things, and so elastic their dialect.

★

IT IS good to be in an unfamiliar place for Christmas. So much of the custom of home can blur the Event which we celebrate that perhaps we honor the past more than we live the present; we feel more the nostalgia for other Christmases than the presence of *this* Christmas. But this Christmas is the only real Christmas; it is not something that has happened but something that *is* happening. And the whole point is that what is happening

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is, quite strangely, *identical with its way of happening.* It is good for the day to strike freshly, to catch you unaware, in a place where there are swimmers on the beach rather than children with sleds and where much of what is going on in the celebration seems an irrelevance or even an interference with your everyday life. The cobbler smiles at your impatience, and the old woman tells you she's busy baking zeppoli for her grandchildren. The world is becoming unmanageable quickly and oddly, and nothing much can be done.

So the midnight discovered us, with all the others, in the tiny piazza outside the church, waiting for the priest and his procession of small boys to come with the Bambino. There were loud explosions of firecrackers here and there in the crowd. The two *carabinieri,* impressively uniformed and alert to this dangerous practice, would run toward one explosion only to permit another to go off behind them. It was apparently the same game that the boys of the village played with them every year, but the law forbade this nonsense and the *carabinieri* could not be as humorous about it as the crowd was. Our own sympathies were somewhere between the crowd and the police; we thought a few of the explosions were too close to us.

But now there were the thin soprano voices of the boys. In the light of the brilliant red flares with which the whole piazza quivered and wavered, we saw the grave young faces, many of them in the quality of Mantegna or Raphael. Then the Monsignore, carrying an elaborately dressed doll asleep on a satin pillow, and here the firecrackers went off everywhere at once and the crowd cheered.

As the procession moved into the church, the crowd began to close in on the piazza and to turn in upon itself through the path that had been made. The doors of the church were wide open. We moved with the crowd, turning our backs on the *carabinieri,* who were busy questioning three of the village youths but not getting very far. As nearly as we could figure, the problem of fireworks on Christmas Eve was the only business the *maresciallo* and his two assistants had in Positano. There was a jail, but no one had been in it in the past ten years. The town was protected from outside marauders —they could leave by only one narrow road and could easily be intercepted. And within the village there was simply no crime at all; everyone left his doors unlocked. The police could concentrate on Christmas Eve.

★

WE FOUND all Positano inside the church. There, the cobbler, a massive man with a massive head of iron-grey hair, looking even nobler than usual in his decent black suit and given now his proper empire in the two little daughters at his side and the delicate young wife. He was humming with the choir: I half-expected to hear his roaring "Benissimo, benissimo," which he replied to any complex demand made upon him and his leather. Near him, our maid Maria Luisa and her ten-year-old daughter with the stiff immaculate hair-ribbon which, in all their poverty, they always managed for Sunday Mass. The husband was being detained in Salerno, with some bureaucratic foolishness about his military service; his record was perfectly fine but it would take a few weeks to convince the officials, who approached these matters not with ill will but with the paralyzing fear of making a mistake and getting caught at it.

There we could see the man whom everybody called Fidele. His unofficial headquarters was the post office, where he could always be reached to do an odd job. He supported five children by this unpredictable sort of work, not begging anything (no one in Positano begged), and he even managed a certain courtliness. He brought us violets one Sunday in January, as soon as they began to appear in the recesses of the mountains; the prize of the sharp-eyed and the high-climbing. And when we left, one of his little girls came over with a small bit of rich lace which she had made for us.

Across the aisle was the bent Marchesa, who took her knitting down to the beach every day in order to oversee and overhear all that went on. She was interested in gossip all right, but she took it on as one of the ancestral functions, a love and a duty. There was little else left, of family or of land. Behind her was Signore Castellani, whose office was the village gasoline-pump, a returned immigrant who told us every day that Positano was lovelier than Brooklyn. I looked for the other Brooklynite, a young fellow of about twenty-two—but I couldn't see him anywhere for the moment—whose parents had pulled him back to Positano to marry and settle, but he missed New York very much and he didn't care for the Positano girls, and all this was going on between him and his parents all the time that we were there. But there were his parents, and their prayers surely included a Nice Italian Girl; and there was the grocer, a poor man who lived with such barrels of olives and anchovies and oil and such swellings of cheese hanging like gorgeous balloons and such great harps of *prosciutto* as most of us never see in a lifetime; and everywhere about us, those whose cause was surely the most bespoken and the most cherished in this house, the fishermen.

Above us all, over the high altar, in the closed world of a huge old panel, sat Our Lady of Positano; dim, Byzantine, and as shadowed in its origin as the village itself.

A young boy delivered the Christmas sermon. Each year one boy of the village was chosen for this honor. This one spoke bravely and a little nervously, gesturing dutifully as the words indicated: arms outspread as he greeted the whole congregation, right arm thrown out stiffly toward the manger for "Uno bambino è nato."

The boy manfully contained his mission. It was not enough that his message was beyond human imagination: it had to be spoken in that pure Italian which was for him almost as unaccustomed as his surplice. *Italianissimo,* I heard one Positanese call it with a certain awe and reverence.

When we came outside again to the piazza we could see the boats and nets motionless on the beach. These were, I supposed, what we had in place of the friendly

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—His Eminence Samuel Cardinal Stritch, in *The New World*, Chicago

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beasts made quiet; for our shepherds were fishermen. And just beyond, the Mediterranean.

For this one night it was not the sea which Positano cautiously raided for its food. Seen apart now from that daily function, it assumed all its age and all its depth, far beyond the reach of the small boats and their nets. Both history and eternity had chosen it to be the source of all we knew. In the dim light I could see the waves leaping and falling where we had been looking for shells that very morning. At their height they would catch the glint of the moon; then they would fall and fold into shadow and slide back to the sea.

Of Note

Natural Law

ON DECEMBER 14 and 15 the Natural Law Institute of the University of Notre Dame presented its fifth annual convocation, sponsored by Alvin A. Gould of Cincinnati, Ohio. Five principal speakers were representatives of the world's great non-Christian religions—Confucian, Buddhist, Hindu, Jewish and Moslem—and spoke on the general theme, the Universality of the Natural Law. The following is excerpted from the preface to the Convocation's program.

> This Natural Law philosophy, for generations the accepted legal philosophy of the American Bench and Bar, was laughed out of most American law schools in later days. It faded from the thinking of the lawyers and judges they had trained. New "isms" took its place. Secularism divorced Government from God. Pragmatism scorned "ethical absolutes" as criteria of human law. Positivism narrowed the "province of Jurisprudence" to the study of man-made law alone. The Relativist said "all concepts are relative." For Materialism there was "no significant difference between a man and a baboon or a grain of sand." Also adopting such "principles" as premises, the Nazi and Communist legal systems showed a shocked world only yesterday the inhuman but wholly logical conclusions. We prosecuted the Nazi leaders at Nuremberg.
>
> It was the Natural Law which really spoke at Nuremberg after decades of derision. The world demurred to the defendants' plea that Positive Law existing at the time their acts were committed had not unmistakably and with detailed precision made them "crimes," indictable before the victors' court. Natural Law alone could show that there were wrongs against humanity which needed no Positive Law to make them "crimes," that there are rights of human beings which do not cease to be such even though all the man-made laws on earth are, as to them, strangely silent.

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Books

Voyage to Windwards: The Life of Robert Louis Stevenson. J. C. Furnas. Sloane. $5.

MOST of the popular ideas about Robert Louis Stevenson set Mr. Furnas' teeth on edge. One woman whom he describes as "not illiterate" remarked to him, "How interesting that you are doing a life of Stevenson! I hadn't thought of him since my children read him." He doesn't record his reply, but so indignant is he at the notion of Stevenson as a writer for children that it was scarcely likely to have been polite. He is equally irritable about the kindly lady authors and would-be authors who spread the legend of the saintly invalid, pure-minded and perpetually cheerful, who lay in bed spinning charming tales. The watered down Stevenson of the official biography and family reminiscences he finds almost as much of a fraud as the lecherous, imitative trickster described by the debunkers of the twenties. Stevenson, in short, has had a raw deal, and if he has dropped from the list of authors given serious critical consideration, it may well be because he has been lost under successive coats of saccharine and gall.

Mr. Furnas has written *Voyage to Windward* to set the record straight. He spent five years gathering the material, studying thousands of manuscripts and letters, many of them newly available, and retracing Stevenson's wanderings from the grave in Samoa back through San Francisco, Saranac Lake, Switzerland, and the Riviera, to the stone Stevenson house in Edinburgh. Stevenson may not spring vibrantly alive from the pages of this biography, but he is convincingly described and explained.

Along the way, the author demolishes some colorful myths. He disposes of Claire, a dark-haired prostitute whom Louis supposedly wanted to marry, and a pair of battling mistresses who came to blows over him in public. He revises the going interpretation of Louis' father as a stern Victorian despot. And he finds that Louis' wife was not the interfering harridan of many earlier biographies but a devoted and determined companion.

Biographers are apt to be suspicious of any wife with a forceful personality of her own, and Fanny Stevenson was no silent helpmate. She considered herself Louis' foremost literary critic, and gave frequent suggestions, and not always ill-advised ones, on his work. She guarded his fragile health with a zeal that alienated some of his convivial cronies, but that certainly helped to pull him through the constant sieges of illness. Other people could ridicule her literary pretensions, her belief in her own psychic powers, and her suspicions of the influence of Louis' friends. But every evidence shows that Louis was deeply in love with her. In wretched health, he traveled 6,000 miles to California to persuade her to divorce her estranged husband and marry him. He appreciated her loyalty and pluck and her willingness to make a home anywhere that the climate seemed congenial, from a 94-foot yacht to a Samoan plantation. Irritations there may have been, but Louis was not a henpecked husband nor Fanny the classic shrew.

Mr. Furnas attempts to do more than clear up controversial points in Stevenson's life. He is out to restore the reputation of a gifted author. If Stevenson had one dominant characteristic, it was his devotion to the art of writing. He studied and experimented and revised until he mastered a style of magnificent melodic prose. At the time of his death—he was 44—his insight and understanding were still maturing; he was working on *Weir of Hermiston,* a novel that Mr. Furnas believes would have secured his reputation and silenced the critics who saw him as a phrase-juggler and a weaver of fragile tales. Mr. Furnas makes an earnest appeal for a reexamination of Stevenson's work and for recognition of his stature as an artist. But even if his biography doesn't set into motion this wholesale re-reading of *The Master of Ballantrae* and *A Footnote to History,* it makes a wonderful story itself.

CAROL H. WEISS.

Negotiating with the Russians. Edited by Raymond Dennett and Joseph E. Johnston. World Peace Foundation. $3.50.

"NOW commenced the famous and historic battle of words. Brest was a podium. From it the Bolsheviks issued their multitudinous, fiery appeals to 'ALL.' If they talked little to the frock-coated diplomats or be-medalled generals who sat opposite them at the green table, they talked much, very much to the workers, soldiers and peasants of the entire world. The Germans protested. The Russians noted the protests and continued their agitation. . . . Politeness was gone. Friendly relations were gone. . . .

"In the oratorical and dialectical contest which raged for weeks, the Germans and Austro-Hungarians were no match for the quick-witted soap-box Russians whose chief business in life had been polemics."

So Louis Fischer describes Trotsky's tactics at Brest-Litovsk, in 1918. If Soviet negotiators behaved in this way after a crushing Russian defeat by Germany, we might expect their conduct after a great victory over Germany to be even more unreasonable and exasperating. So it has proved since the Second World War. The tactics practiced by Trotsky have been so elaborated and standardized by the representatives of world Communism that we now encounter them in places as far apart as Lake Success and Panmunjon. Communist negotiators have the great advantage of being unhampered by any regard for truth, of being willing in Lenin's words "to resort to all sorts of stratagems, maneuvers, illegal methods, to evasions and subterfuges."

Soviet techniques of negotiation

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form the subject of this excellent cooperative book published by the World Peace Foundation. Each chapter concerns itself with some particular dialectical tug-of-war between Americans and Russians.

All the chapters are well done, but a few stand out from the rest. General John R. Dean's amusing chapter, "Negotiating on Military Assistance, 1943-1945," traces the sharp deterioration in Soviet official manners once the tide of war had turned and Lend Lease had ceased to be a question of vital importance. Practically all proposals for Russo-Western military cooperation originated with the British or Americans, and most were either rejected by the Russians or accepted "in principle" only to be thwarted in practice. General Deane concludes that there is only one man in the Soviet Union who can make important decisions and minor concessions without risking his neck, and that is Stalin. Such extreme centralization is a source of weakness as well as strength.

Mark Ethridge and Professor C. E. Black of Princeton have contributed an excellent chapter on Russo-American friction over the Balkans which describes the way in which Communist regimes were installed in Bulgaria and Rumania after those countries had been "liberated" by the Red Army. Mr. Ethridge, who went to the Balkans in 1945 as a representative of the State Department, submitted his findings to the Secretary of State in December of that year. His report was not published, because the Department did not wish to arouse anti-Soviet feeling in the United States which might endanger the prospects of Russo-American cooperation. Such prospects actually did not exist.

The article by Professor Ernest J. Simmons of Columbia on cultural exchange, or rather the lack of it, fails to point out that Professor Simmons himself, like a good many students of the humanities who are not entirely at home in the realm of political realities, was until recently notably sympathetic toward the Soviet Union. The present chapter, however, records honestly his increasing frustration at the persistent failure of the Soviet government to accept repeated American offers to open cultural relations on a large scale. The climax come in 1947, when the Soviet government made it illegal for Soviet citizens to have any sort of unofficial contacts with foreigners.

Philip Moseley's brilliant concluding chapter on Soviet techniques of negotiation reinforces the impression that emerges from the other chapters: Soviet negotiators may come to a conference merely to make propaganda, or they may come merely to listen and report back, or they may come bound by detailed instructions. In any case they have no authority to make any concessions not authorized by Moscow, and often they are afraid to report back any new proposals by their opponents or to make recommendations to their government. They are automatons rather than diplomats.

Americans who stared in perplexed irritation last summer at Yakov Malik's televised face as he tried to

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obstruct United Nations actions in the Korean war, or who have followed the tedious truce negotiations in Korea, would do well to read this book, although the editors have unfortunately not included a chapter on Soviet participation in the United Nations, so that such explosive issues as Iran and Korea are omitted. Perhaps the main conclusion to be drawn from it is that East is East and West is West, and never the twain shall meet.

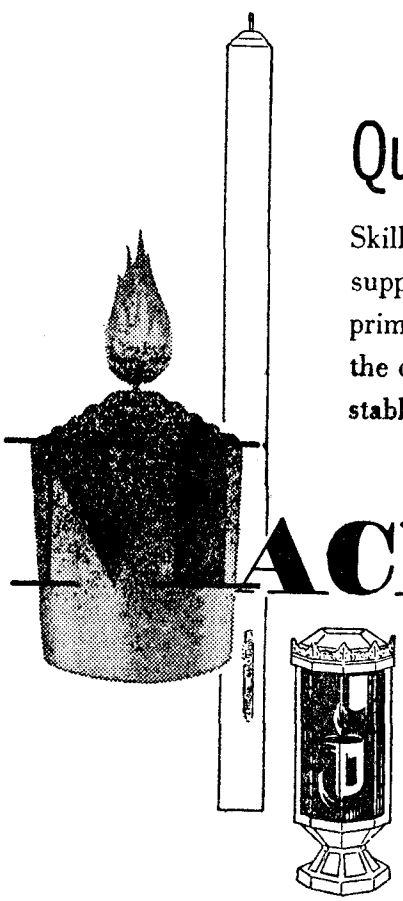
HAROLD C. HINTON.

The Life and Adventures of La Rochefoucauld. Morris Bishop. Cornell. $3.75.

"NO MAN has ever been mourned so deeply," thought Madame de Sévigné; she herself wept at his death, and so, of course, did Madame de la Fayette, who was really inconsolable. "Where will she find another such friend," wondered Madame de Sévigné, "such social gifts, such sweetness of character, such understanding, such thoughtfulness for herself and her son?" Since the dead man in question was the sixth Duc de la Rochefoucauld, the ashen wisdom of whose maxims has been respected by the centuries, one might ask why nearly two hundred years have passed without the publication of a proper biography. The answer, while it is never stated outright in Morris Bishop's admirable little book, may be that it is next to impossible for us in the twentieth century to imagine the point of view of the French nobility on the eve of the reign of Louis XIV. The Fronde, we think, was a silly series of military campaigns, and if we are able to conjure up the world of the nobles who loathed Richelieu and Mazarin, we can scarcely refrain from picturing the sort of dukes who might nibble at lamb chops but never sink their teeth into an honest steak.

But this is not to deny the merits of Mr. Bishop's biography. He fashions the ideal stage set for his hero, and if his hero does not startle us it is because he saved his inner self for the distillation of the maxims. We are told of the ubiquitous influence of Honoré d'Urfé's precious novel *Astrée,* and we are half persuaded that a man of La Rochefoucauld's intelligence might imagine himself in such a realm. Slowly we are led to understand how it was that he haunted the blue room of Madame de Rambouillet, filled with ladies so refined that one of them fainted at the sight of a naked dog, how it was that he fell in love at eighteen with the 32-year-old Duchesse de Chevreuse, finally ordering one of his gentleman in waiting to see her in safety across the Spanish border, and eventually we are convinced that he might have fallen in love with the Duchesse de Longueville.

Mr. Bishop likens the Fronde to a kind of mechanical ballet, and it was the tragedy of the reign of Louis XIII that a gentleman as worldly as La Rochefoucauld felt obliged to join the solemn but absurd dance led by the princes of the House of



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Condé. Madame de Motteville, who was not blind to the follies of her era, realized that the wars of the Fronde were not determined by economic considerations. "The ladies," she said, "are ordinarily the first cause of the great upsets of states; and wars, which ruin kingdoms and empires, nearly always arise from the effects of their beauty or their malice."

Mr. Bishop argues, and his reasoning is persuasive, that the maxims were personal confessions rather than the cynical observations of a detached spectator of court life. There were times when La Rochefoucauld must have been weary enough of the masquerade of his fellow nobles—did he not dare to assert that whatever joy Richelieu's enemies felt, his death was "most prejudicial to the state"?

It is hardly necessary to add that Mr. Bishop's taste, as always, is sure, and that this book is a labor of love.

WAYNE ANDREWS.

The Gila: River of the Southwest. Edwin Corle. Illustrated by Ross Santes. Rinehart. $4.50.

THIS anecdotal history of Southern Arizona's principal river provides about all that one might look for in the lengthening Rivers of America Series. The illustrations by Ross Santes are an additional and distinctive contribution.

Despite the fact that this area witnessed the geological cataclysms which gave the Southwest its arid character, and despite the exaggerated roughness of the Spaniards, Apaches and Tombstone-type of American pioneers from the East who went there, this chronicle goes along with singular quiet and serenity. *The Gila* treats the prehistorical problems and suppositions of this watershed area far more amply than it does the current problems of water and irrigation, power and property. The general tone is more antiquarian and picturesque than it is historical and analytic. Possibly the tone which the thoroughly capable and experienced author projects here will prove longer dominant than the air of sociological hubbub that earnest rebuilders manage to arouse in their debates about the proper destiny of our country's vast desert lands. It is certainly a tone that must not be missed when one visits or studies about or works the wonderful lands which nature has made of unique attraction in all the continent.

PHILIP BURNHAM.

The Fear of Freedom. Francis Biddle. Doubleday. $3.50.

"HOW CAN WE protect our nation from acts of disloyalty and subversion that may endanger our national security, and at the same time preserve our traditions of freedom? What procedures are necessary to achieve this end? Why are the present means failing to do this?"

In these words, a former Attorney General of the United States, points up some of the vexing questions of the day. And if, with wise restraint, he proposes few specific remedies, he does clear the air with some forthright diagnosis.

Following in the footsteps of Professor Chafee of Harvard, Mr. Biddle considers the complexities presented by the problems of free speech in this and other countries. He reviews various periods of national hysteria: England during the terror of the French Revolution, the Alien and Sedition Laws in the days of President Jefferson, and the fantastic Palmer raids in this country following World War I. He gives special attention to the government's "loyalty program" in our own day and he deplores, in vigorous prose, the inclination of federal agencies to test an employee's loyalty by reference to his private opinions rather than to his public behavior. There is a difference, the author maintains, between loyalty and conformity and, if we fail to make the distinction, fear of freedom may very well diminish the reality of freedom.

Mr. Biddle believes that "loyalty" is a "continuing problem for the government executive, not for the legislative branch; not for the Un-American Activities Committee, or the Tenney Committee, or the

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Broyles Commission." It is a matter, he is convinced, for the federal rather than for the state governments, and it is not something that should be "the meddlesome concern of municipalities." The problem is one of emphasis, not of absolutes; and the effort to insure national security "must be directed at well-defined ends; seeing the danger precisely where it is; balancing the extent of the possible risk against the psychological costs involved by the suggested restraint."

ALL in all, this is a wise and a courageous book. It says things which need to be said and it says them fairly and calmly. This reviewer, it must be admitted, would have liked a more thorough and informed analysis of the hearings before the House Committee on Un-American Activities in 1947. The Hollywood section is casual reporting, not on a par with the deep and penetrating work of other chapters, and yet this is a minor consideration. The main sweep of the book is invigorating, at a time when intellectual vigor is a rare quality.

One could wish that Mr. Biddle had chosen to examine some of the constitutional questions that are involved. His analysis of administrative procedures in the "loyalty program" is brilliant but his comment on the courts is brief and limited.

Is it too soon to look for some extended discussion of the opinions, on appeal, in the matter of the eleven Communists convicted before Judge Medina in 1949? In particular, the affirming opinion of Judge Learned Hand in the Circuit Court of Appeals? As well as the concurring opinion of Justice Jackson, in the United States Supreme Court, and the dissenting opinions of Justice Black and Justice Douglas?

Mr. Biddle merely observes that the Supreme Court has sustained the constitutionality of the Alien Registration Act of 1940 and adds that "its wisdom is another question." Yet, for many observers, it may look very much like the question. Especially, when it is tied in with so many other questions.

Does a democracy, in law and in logic, have the right and the obligation to anticipate in matters of self-defense? Can we properly move against a conspiracy to commit a conspiracy? And if so, how far have we gone beyond the "clear and present danger" theory as first developed by Justice Holmes in *Schenck* v. *United States?* Have we reached the point where, as a matter of national security, we must now operate on a theory of clear and *probable* danger?

For himself, Mr. Biddle would rely on the old treason statute of a hundred years ago. He has no liking for the Smith Act of 1940 and the general theory of guilt by association. As to the general direction in which the Court may or should move, he maintains a discreet silence. This, no doubt, is proper restraint on his part but he leaves the field wide open, at this point, for authors not quite so restrained.

EMMET LAVERY.

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Introduction to Paul Claudel. Mary Ryan, M.A. Newman. $3.

THE KEY to this very stimulating little book on Claudel's poetry is the statement that "the nature of our study forces us to dwell on the thoughts rather than on the form." Some readers may not agree that we may discuss poetry in that way. However striking the ideas, they will say, you must make poetry with words.

Yet Mary Ryan's procedure seems the correct one for Claudel. Because his long, loose line would strike, say, a Robert Lowell as part of a laxness of organization, a lack of intensity extending also to the vocabulary, Claudel may be classified as a poet of ideas which he does not reduce to any particular form of words. Some of those striking and sublime ideas give this book its interest.

Claudel's ideas are theological (and easy to extract because not compounded with the poetry). There may come a day when our rimed theology will seem as incredible as the rimed cooking recipes and garden hints of another day seem to us. Though we may argue the vast and starry distance between divine grace and cabbages, our principle (Mr. Henry Rago calls it "the heresy of the sublime"), whereas it easily proves that Joyce Kilmer is a consistent poet, embarrassingly proves that William Shakespeare is not.

Even the propaganda value of Claudel's Catholic verse seems questionable. A Claudel partisan, Father Bondy, admits that conversions in the Catholic revival are due mostly to the influence, not of Catholics, but of *les poètes maudits.*

Yet, if Claudel failed with Gide, he succeeded with Jammes. If his lines seem loose and undistinguished, he is a formidable student of metrics. and it is hard to gainsay what Mary Ryan's publishers claim: that Claudel's influence on contemporary French literature is unparalleled.

WILLIAM J. KERRIGAN.

With Benefit of Christmas

By December 18 the number of new Christmas gift subscriptions to The Commonweal had virtually doubled the best previous record. In fact, this has been the best week since the start of the survival campaign. The total for new long-term subscriptions has now reached 3,735, leaving only 765 to go.

There was a generous reference to the magazine in Rev. George G. Higgins' "The Yardstick," which appeared in a score of the nation's diocesan papers, December 14: "It would be difficult to exaggerate the importance of The Commonweal as a witness to the Gospel in the temporal order. If it didn't exist it would have to be created. It is the only publication of its kind in the United States: a weekly journal of opinion edited by laymen on their own initiative and responsibility for the purpose of analyzing political, social and cultural affairs in the light of Christian principles . . ."

• REVIEWERS •

CAROL H. WEISS until recently was an executive officer in the New York headquarters of the Girl Scouts of America.

HAROLD C. HINTON is a member of the Georgetown University faculty.

WAYNE ANDREWS is the author of *The Vanderbilt Legend* and *Battle for Chicago.*

EMMET LAVERY is a playwright and Hollywood script writer. He is the author of *The Magnificent Yankee, The First Legion* and *Second Spring.*

REV. WILLIAM J. KERRIGAN teaches at Ottumwa Heights College in Iowa.

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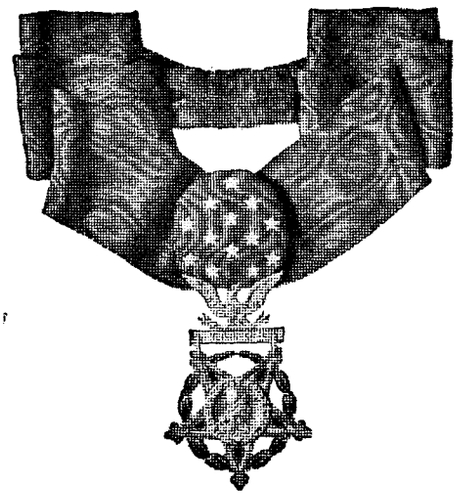
Medal of Honor

Sergeant Travis Watkins, Gladewater, Tex.—Medal of Honor



Private First Class Melvin Brown, Mahaffey, Pa.—Medal of Honor

Lieutenant Frederick Henry, Clinton, Okla.—Medal of Honor

Major General William F. Dean, Berkeley, Calif.—Medal of Honor

Sergeant Charles Turner, Boston, Mass.—Medal of Honor

This is the season when you think of stars. The one over Bethlehem. The ones on Christmas trees.

But this year remember another star, too—the one on the Medal of Honor. And make a place in your heart for the brave, good men who've won it. Men who, oftener than not, made the final, greatest sacrifice—so that the stars on your Christmas tree, and the stars in your country's flag, might forever shine undimmed.

Right now—today—is the time to do something important for these men who died for you. You can, by helping to defend the country they defended so far "above and beyond the call of duty."

One of the best ways you can make defense *your* job, too, is to buy more . . . and more . . . and more United States Defense Bonds. For your bonds help strengthen America. And if you make this nation strong enough you'll create, and keep, the peace for which men **died.**

Buy Defense Bonds through the Payroll Savings Plan where you work or the Bond-A-Month Plan where you bank. Start today!

Peace is for the strong...Buy U. S. Defense Bonds

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